

The Barker Families

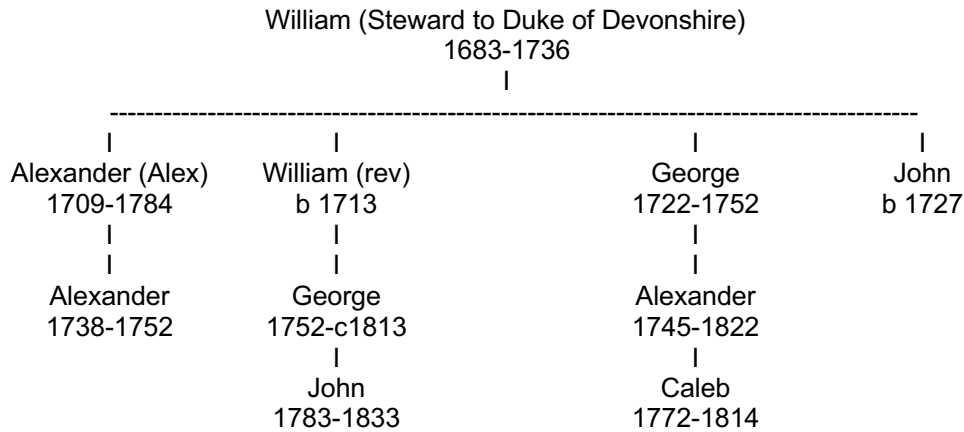
of

Edensor, Baslow & Bakewell

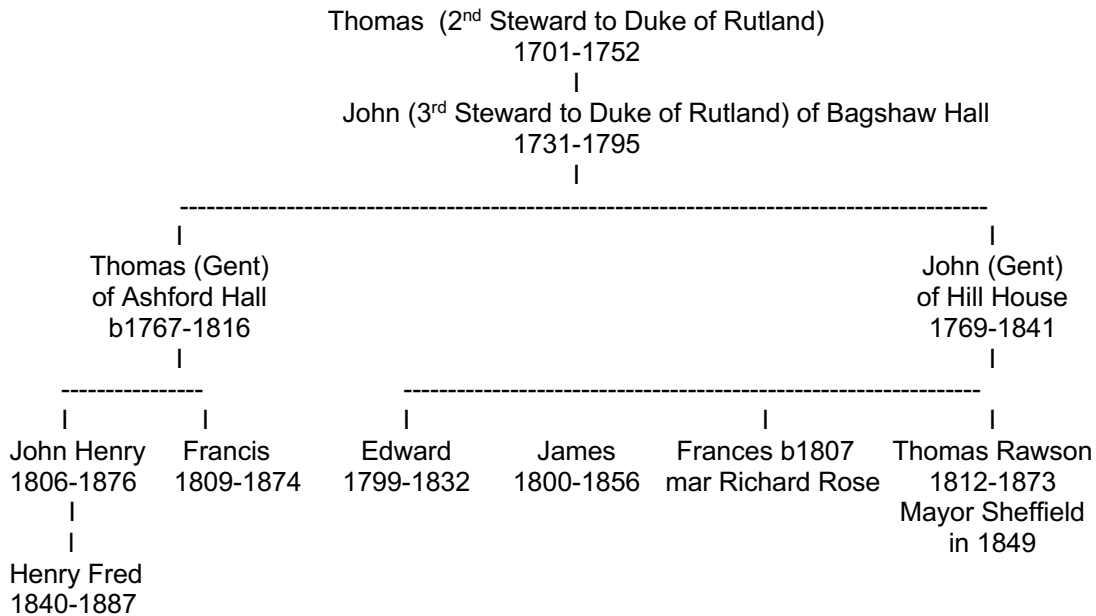
**And their involvement
In the Derbyshire Lead Industry**

Family Trees

Edensor/Baslow



Bakewell



*These family trees list only persons known to have been involved in the lead industry.
They are constructed mainly from parish registers and memorial inscriptions,
A fuller version of the family trees is on website www.baslowhistory.co.uk*

Lead Mining in Derbyshire

There has been lead mining in Derbyshire since Roman times or even before. Until say 1700 production was small scale, almost a cottage industry. Many mines were owned by groups of investors, who tended to be local gentry and moneyed yeomen.

After 1700 things began to change. Business boomed. Techniques in mining were improving. Longer and deeper soughs (drainage tunnels) increased the ore available. The first steam pumping engines arrived. New veins were discovered. Smelting was transformed by the introduction of the much more efficient Cupola furnace. The 1750s and 60s were particularly good years with expanding output and profits.

These advances lead to changes in the structure of the industry. Organisation was needed to supply a regular flow of ore to the smelters, and marketing experience to sell the product. As the industry developed it was inevitable that small units would be taken over by individuals, families and companies who had the necessary expertise and finance to control each part of the process.

Lead output started to decline in the mid to late 1700s, partly because mines were worked out. Prices dropped in the late 1700s with a revival in the early 1800s, but output continued to decline. The import of cheap lead from abroad in the mid 1800s especially from Australia was the final straw, though a few mines, large and small battled through to the 1900s. The bonanza of Millclose mine at Darley Dale was a final welcome exception that continued to 1941.

The Families

The “Barkers of Bakewell and Baslow” are well known to the historians of the lead industry in Derbyshire. In this article I have portrayed the family relationships and summarised the roles they played in the industry.

One family lived in in the village of Edensor and the other in the market town of Bakewell. By the early 1700s, both families were prominent locally. They were not gentry, but could be described as well to do yeomen. This article follows family members who were involved in the local lead industry. It is a near certainly than many of their relations had, and would continue to have over the years, financial interests in lead mining without personal involvement in their management.

Barkers of Edensor

Edensor is a small village in the Derwent valley, close to Chatsworth House the home of the Dukes of Devonshire. The name Barker appears several times in the Parish Registers in the late 1500s and early 1600s but with insufficient data to establish relationships. However a direct line can be traced from Robert b1583, through William [b1611], Alexander [b1639] to William [b1683]. This last William became Steward to the Duke of Devonshire in 1707.

William had four sons, all involved in the lead industry.

- Alexander (Alex) 1709 to 1784 inherited the post of Steward to the Duke when his father died (or possibly at a later date). He inherited his fathers lead business, and was for a while trustee for his brother George's estate. His only surviving son Alexander died in his teens

- William [b1703] was ordained and became chaplain to the Duke of Devonshire. He brought up his family in Edensor in a house (now replaced by Jap Cottages) close to the church. A younger son George [b1752] later managed the family lead business followed later by his son John [b1783]
- George 1722 to 1752 – see below
- John 1727 to 1797 had no children. In the years before his death he was the senior member of the family lead firm.

For generations the Barkers had lived in the house now called The Old Vicarage, probably as freeholders. In the 1780s the Duke was keen to acquire all the freehold property in Edensor village, a process that ended up years later with the model village we know today. Soon after Alexander died in 1784, the house was acquired the Duke. John Barker [b1727] was still in the house in 1785 but must have moved away soon after. In 1790 The Duke enticed Emmanuel Barker, son of the chaplain William, to leave his house by exchanging it for a much larger property in Bakewell. Soon all the extended family was leaving the village. The last Barker baptism was in 1790 and the last burial in 1822. There were only two Barkers recorded in the 1851 census both servants who came from local villages.

The family continued their lead business but lived elsewhere.

George Barker of Baslow

George Barker born 1722 was the second son of William Barker steward to the Duke of Devonshire. He grew up in Edensor, taking part in the lead business possibly from his teens. In 1743 he married his cousin Deborah White, who had earlier inherited her father's estate which included a house in Baslow and land in Topley. Her aunt was married to William Barker (the Steward)

George moved to in Baslow, where he had a family including three sons before his death in 1752 at the early age of thirty.

- Alexander 1745-1822,
- Joseph White 1749-1753
- George who was born and died in 1752.

Confusingly, George the son of William (The Chaplain) was also born in 1752. It was this latter George who later took part in the family business.

It is not known how long Deborah stayed in Baslow. She may well have moved to Edensor as her younger two sons were buried there in 1752 and 1753. Her surviving son Alexander [b1745] eventually moved to Topley. Alexander's son Caleb later played an active role in the family business

The Bakewell Barkers

The Bakewell Barkers have been traced back to a prominent Darley Dale family. Records start with Robert [b1552], followed by Brian, Henry and then John 1668-1727. John trained as a joiner, but caught the eye of the Duke of Rutland eventually becoming his Steward. He lived at Rowsley Hall now the Peacock Inn before dying at Belvoir castle in 1727.

His son Thomas [1701] took over the post of Steward, moving to the market town of Bakewell where he lived in The Hall (Bagshaw Hall) a prominent house which

reflected both his wealth and his status in the town. He would have had interests in the lead industry including shares in local mines. In 1729 he went into partnership with William Barker of Edensor as described below. He died at the age of 54 in 1754.

His eldest son John (1731-1795) inherited at the age of 23 both the lead interests and the Rutland stewardship, and soon became a successful businessman prominent in the local community.

In due course he was succeeded in the business by his sons Thomas [b1767] and John [b1769] and later by his grandchildren Frances, James and (in law) Thomas Rawson. Other family members were lead merchants in their own right. Their large houses which included Ashford Hall, Hill House, and East Lodge indicated their wealth and social standing.

Unlike the Edensor group most remained an extended family group based in Bakewell, at least until the mid 1800s.

Note: There is a suggestion that William and Alexander were cousins. There is no evidence of this in the parish records, at least since the early 1600s, though a relationship by marriage is certainly possible

Barkers in the Lead trade 1729-1749

In 1729 the lead industry was doing well. William (b1683) steward of the Duke of Devonshire and Thomas (b1701) steward of the Duke of Rutland both knew a great deal about the local lead industry as both their Dukes had extensive interests in the area. With an eye to profit they formed a partnership to build (or replace) a smelter at Shacklow – at the bottom of Taddington Dale. This was conveniently close to a supply of lead from the mines in which they had an interest in the Sheldon and Monyash areas. Over the next few years they gradually acquired control or ownership of mines nearby.

William [b1683] of Edensor died in 1736, and his place was taken by his son Alexander (Alex), [b1709]. A new partnership agreement was signed the same year between Alex and Thomas of Bakewell

1743 was a key year in the Barker families. George [b1722] came of age, married and moved to Baslow. He immediately entered a new partnership with Thomas (b1701) of Bakewell. This partnership managed by George was called George Barker & Co. Its main interest was smelting, though it soon expanded into other branches of the industry. It thrived. Meanwhile his brother Alexander (Alex) continued his earlier partnership with the same Thomas, concentrating mainly on the marketing of the lead produced by the families businesses.

These arrangements lasted only 5 years. The partnerships were dissolved in around 1749 and the families went their own ways each retaining a part of their earlier holdings. The reason is unclear, though the impending deaths of George Barker (1722-1752) and Thomas (1701-1752) might have been a factor

Both Families after 1749

Expansion of the families interests continued apace so that by 1760 the Barker families between them had expanded their business to such an extent that they dominated the lead industry in an area of say 10 miles around Bakewell. This influence continued for well over 50 years.

The families leased, owned or had partnerships in the lead mines, and they leased or owned the lead smelters, be they ore hearths, slag hearths or later cupolas. . Both families made partnerships with other organisations. An important part of the business was the merchandising of the lead product. Some lead was sold locally, some was exported using lead merchants in Bawtry the nearest river port or in London. Arrangements were made to supply local industries especially in the industrial towns of Sheffield and Chesterfield.

The Edensor & Baslow Barkers after 1749

After the families separated in 1748, Alex took responsibility to the marketing side of the Edensor business. George after his marriage in 1752 lived in Baslow. He continued with his company George Barker & Co. with a main interest in the mining and the smelting

George died in 1752, at the early age of 30 leaving a widow and young children. In his will he left his assets in trust to his brother Alex who continued the expansion of the business. Alex must have kept the business name George Barker & Co immortalising the name George, and leading to the phrase The Barkers of Bakewell and Baslow - even though every other member of the latter family lived in Edensor.

For a while Alex together with his brothers William (The Rev) [b1713] and John [b1727] ran the business between them. In due course in the 1770s the next generation, Alexander [1745] the son of George and George [1752] the son of William, joined the family grouping, to be succeeded in due course by the following generation, Caleb son of Alexander and John son of William.

By the early 1800s the partnership consisted of the George (son of Rev William) and his son John [1783], and Caleb [1772] son of Alexander (see the family tree).

The basis of the company from the start was lead smelting, they owned or leased a number of lead smelters. They also owned lead mines and bought the ore from other local mines. Most of the lead produced was sold through agents in Bawtrey and London. Some was used locally.

It was during the good years of the industry, about 1759, that the Barkers had formed a partnership with Richard and John Wilkinson of Chesterfield, lead merchants and red lead manufacturers. Within the partnership, the Barkers had the capacity for acquiring and smelting the lead, while the Wilkinsons had to expertise the to market it. In addition the Barkers new cupola at Harewood was conveniently close to Wilkinson's Red Lead Mill at Cathole.

By say 1800 the good years were ending. Caleb went bankrupt on 1807, and soon after Wilkinson left the partnership. George died in 1813. His son John [b1783] left the management in 1817 and eventually sold out to Benjamin Wyatt of Eyam in 1829.

The Barkers of Bakewell after 1749

Thomas continued to manage his share of the earlier partnerships until his early death in 1752 at the age of 51.

As an aside it is interesting to note the age of death of the Barkers in charge of smelting in the 1730s and 1740s – Thomas (Bakewell) at 51, William (Edensor) at 53 and George (Baslow) at 30, all relatively young for professionals at the time. Was lead poisoning responsible?

John [1731] , the eldest son of Thomas, must have been helping his father before taking over in 1752 at the age of 21 years. Like that of the Edensor Barkers his business thrived.

His office as the Steward to the Duke of Rutland, continued to give him advantages and opportunities to pursue his lead mining and smelting interests. An example might be the placing of his new cupola in Baslow in 1760. The site is still called Cupola and is conveniently close to Robin Hood where as land agent to the Duke, he had a responsibility for the rapidly developing Baslow coal mine.

He had brothers who may have helped. In due course his sons, Thomas b1767 and John b1769 came of age and eventually took over the concern.

Later John's grandsons, James, Frances and (especially) Thomas Rawson took over the business, which survived until 1875, when their last asset the cupola at Alport was sold to John Fairburn.

Conclusion

The Barker connection with the lead industry ended in 1875, about 150 years after it started in 1729 with a small smelter in Shacklow. Fortunes were made, and some lost. The Edensor family dispersed in the early 1800s taking their wealth and expertise with them. The Bakewell stayed on in Bakewell, to become leading figures in this small market town. The name The Barkers of Baslow (Edensor!) and Bakewell will continue in the annals of the Derbyshire lead industry.

I have drawn heavily on the works of Lynn Willis

- Bulletin Peak District Mines Historical Soc. Vol * No 6 Aut 1983
- Derbyshire Archaeological Journal The Barker Family and the Eighteenth Century Lead Industry

I acknowledge information about the Barker family from Peter Barker (no relation) of Bakewell

Parish records, Births Marriages and Deaths, have been the main source of information for making the family trees.